

CHAPTER VII.

The canon and Mrs. Egremont were getting on pretty well together, but there was much more stiffness and less cordiality between the two cousins, although Mark got the window open into the con-servatory, and showed Nuttie the way into the garden, advising her to ask Ronaldson, the gardener, to fill the conservatory with flowers.

Presently his father went off to storm the den of the master of the house, and there was a pleasant quarter of an hour, during which the three went through the conservatory, and Mark showed the insand-outs of the garden, found out Ronaldson, and congratulated him on having some one at last to appreciate his flowers, begging him to make the conservatory beautiful. And Mrs. Egremont's smile was so effective that the Scot forthwith

roar. The two ladies came out into the hall as Mr. Egremont was crossing it. He made an inclination of the head, and uttered a sort of good morning to his daughter, but she was perfectly content to have no closer salutation.

"So his reverence has been to see you," observed Mr. Egremont. "William, if

you like it better."
"Oh, yes, and he was kindness itself!"
"And how did Master Mark look at finding I could dispense with his assistance?"
"I think he is very glad."

Mr. Egremont laughed. "You are a simple woman, Edda! The pose of virtuous hero was to have been full compen-cation for all that it cost him! And no doubt he looks for the reward of virtue

Wherewith he looked full at Ursula, vho, to her extreme vexation, felt herself blushing up to the ears. She fidgeted on her chair, and began a most untrue "I'm sure—" for, indeed, the poor girl was sure of nothing, but that her father's manner was most uncomfortable to her. His laugh choked whatever she might have said, which perhaps was well, and her mother's cheeks glowed as much as

"Did the ennoness-Jane, I mean-come up?" Mr. Egremont went on, "Mrs. Egremont? No: she sent word

that she is coming after luncheon. "H'm! Then I shall ride out and leave you to her majesty. Now look you. Alice, you are to be very careful with William's wife. She is a Condamine, you know, and thinks no end of herself; and your position emong women-folk of the county depends more on how she takes you up than anything else. But that doesn't mean that you are to let her give herself that you are the elder brother's wife—
Mrs. Egremont of Bridgelieid Egremont—
it. I only wish and she is nothing but a parson.

and I won't have her meddling in my by a good, wholesome gigging.

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business have you two to be so inconventionse. Only don't you be absurd and of iently alike? You are as bad as the twin and she is nothing but a parson's wife,

ceive her?" exciaimed the poor lady, utter-ly confused by these contrary directions. "Not I! I can't abide the woman! nor she me!" He added, after a moment, "You will do better without me."

So he went out for his ride, and Ursula asked, "Oh, mother, what will you do?" "The best I can, my dear. They are good people, and are sure to be kinder than I deserve."

Mrs. Egremont turned the conversation to the establishing themselves in the pavillon, whither she proceeded to import some fancy work that she had bought in Loudon, and sent Nuttle to Ronaldson. who was arranging calceolarias, begonias and geraniums in the conservatory, to beg for some cut flowers for a great dusty tooking vase in the center of the table.

These were being arranged when Mrs. William Egremont and Miss Blanche Egremont were ushered in, and there were the regular kindred embraces, after which Alice and Nuttle were aware of a very handsome, dignified looking lady, well though simply dressed in what was evidently her home costume, her whole air curiously fitting the imposing nickname of the Canoness. Blanche was a slight, delicate looking, rather pretty girl in a lawn-tennis dress. The visitor took the part of treating the newcomers as well-established relations.

"We would not inundate you all at once," she said, "but the children are all very eager to see their cousin. I wish you would come down to the rectory with me. My ponies are at the door. I would me. My ponies are at the door. I would drive you, and Ursula might walk with Blanche." And, as Alice hesitated for a moment, considering how this might agree with the complicated instructions that she had received, she added, "Never mind, Alwyn. I saw him going off just before I came up, and he told William he was going to look at some horses at Hale's, so he is disposed of for a good many hours."

Alice decided that her husband would probably wish her to comply, and she re-

probably wish her to comply, and she re-joiced to turn her daughter in among the cousins, so hats, gloves and parasols were fetched, and the two mothers drove away with the two sleek little toy ponies. By which it may be perceived that Mrs. William Egremont's first impressions were

The drive was on the whole a success, and so was the tea drinking in the veran-da, where Aunt Alice and little five-yearda, where Aunt Alice and little five-year-old Basil became fast friends and mutual admirers; the canon strolled out and was installed in the big, cushloned basket-chair, that crackled under his weight; Blanche recounted Nuttie's successes, and her own tennis engagements for the week; Mark lay on a rug and tensed her and her dachshund; Nuttle listened to the family chatter as if it were a play, and May dis-pensed the cups, and looked grave and se-

"Well?" said the canon anxiously, when Mark, Blanche and little Basil had in-sisted on escorting the guests home, and he and his wife were for a few minutes

"It might have been much worse," said the lady. "She is a good little innocent thing, and has more good sense than I expected. Governessy, that's all, but she will shake out of that."
"Of course she will. It's the best thing imaginable for Alwyn!"

CHAPTER VIII. A garden party, Mrs. William Egremont ecided. would be the best mode of testi-

approbation of her sister-inlaw, and introducing the newcomers to the neighborhood. So the invitations were sent forth for an early day of the

When the day arrived the mother and daughter crossed the gardens, Nuttle chattering all the way about the tennis tactics she had picked up from Blanche, while her mother answered her somewhat mechanically, wondering, as her eye fell on the square squat gray church tower, what had become of the earnest devotion to church work and intellectual parsuits that used to characterize the girl.

As Nuttie was sitting on the grass in carnest contemplation of Blanche's play, a hand was familiarly laid on her shoul-der, and a voice said, "I haven't seen that horrid girl yet!"

beautiful. And Mrs. Egremont's smile was so effective that the Scot forthwith took out his knife and presented her with the most precious of the roses within his reach.

Here a gong, a perfectly unknown sound to Nuttie, made itself heard, and rather astonished her by the concluding.

The two ladies came out into the message about the whole creatures of mirth and joyousness about the whole creature, as if she were part and parcel of the sunbeam in which she stood.

which she stood,
"What horrid girl?" said Nuttie,
"The interloper, the newly discovered
savage, come to upset—ah!"—with a little
shrick—"it isn't May! I beg your par-

"I'm May's cousin," said Nuttle, "Ur-

sula Egremont."
"Oh, no!" and therewith the fact burst on both girls at once. They stood still a moment in dismay, then the stranger went into a fit of laughter. "Oh, I beg your pardon! I can't help it! It's so funny! Nuttie was almost infected, though mewhat burt.

"Who said I was horrid?" she asked.
"Nobody! Nobody but me—Annaple
Ruthven—and they'll all tell you, May
and all, that I'm putting my foot in it. And I never meant that you were horrid -you yourself-you know-only--"
"Ouly nobody wanted us here," said
Nuttie; "but we could not help it."

Nuttie; "but we could not help it."
"Of course not. It was shocking, just my way. Please forgive me!" and she looked most pleading. Nuttie held out her hand with something about "No one could mind"; and therewith Annaple cried, "Oh, if you don't mind, we can have our laugh out!" and the rippling laughter did set Nattie off at once. The peal was not over when May herself was upon them, demanding what was the joke. demanding what was the joke, "Oh, there she is! The real May! Why,"

"Oh, there she is! The real May! Why," said Annapie, kissing her, "only think where I've been and gone and thought this was you, and inquired about—what was it?—the awful monster—the chimera dire—that Mark had routed up—"
"No; you didn't say that," said Nuttle, but recorded.

"Never mind what I said. Don't repeat to forget it. Now it is swept to the winds

case in white satin who left her looks to us both," said May, "You'll have to wear badges," said An-

naple. "You know the Leslies were so troublesome that one had to be shipped off to the East Indies and the other to the West,"

At that moment, Blanche's side coming out victorious, Nuttie descended into the arena to congratulate and be asked to

form part of the next set. Annaple also joined in the same set.

The Ruthvens had very blue blood in the Ruthvens had very blue blood in their veins, but as there were nine of the present generation, they possessed little beyond their long pedigree; even the head of the family, Lord Ronnisglen, being forced to live as a soldier, leaving his castle to grouse shooters. His seven brothers had fared mostly in distant lands as they could and his nothers had fared as they could, and his mother had found a home, together with her youngest child, at Lescombe, where her eldest was the wife of Sir John Delmar. Lady Ronnis-

glen was an invalid, confined to the house. and Lady Delmar had daughters fast treading on the heels of Annabella, so christened, but always called Annable after the old Scottish queens, her ances-tors. She had been May Egremont's chief friend ever since her importation at 12 Annaple's lightness and dexterity ren

dered her the best of the lady tennis players, and the unpracticed Ursula found herself defeated in the match, in spite of a partner whose play was superior to Mark's, and with whom she shyly walked

off to eat ices.
"I see," said Annaple, "it is a country town edition of May . I shan't blunder between them ngain."
"She will polish," said Mark, "but she is not equal to her mother."

"Whom I have not seen yet. Ah, there's Mr. Egremont! Why, he looks quite ren-"Well, he may be!"

"But, Mark, not to hurt your feelings, e must have behaved atrociously," "I'm not going to deny it," said Mark.

They walked slowly up the terrace, and Mark paused as they came near Mrs. Egremont to say, "Aunt Alice, here is Miss Ruthven, May's great friend." Annaple met a pleasant smile, and they shook hands, exchanging an observation

or two. Lady Delmar made a second de scent in person to hurry Annaple away. "Isn't it disgusting?" said May, catching her step-mother's smile.

"You will see a good deal more of the same kind," said the canoness; "I am afraid more mortification is in store for Mark than he guesses. I wish that girl were more like her mother."

"Mamma" a girl brought on among up.

"Mamma! a girl brought up among um-rella makers! Just fancy! Why, she

"Don't set Mark against her, May; he might do worse."
"Her head is a mere tennis ball." said
May, drawing her own higher than ever.

"and no one would know her from a shop "She is young enough," said the can-

oness, and I don't think you realize the change Mark will feel." "Better so than sell himself," muttered May.

CHAPTER IX.

Nine miles was a severe distance through country lanes in November to go to a ball; but the Redeastle Hunt Ball was the ball of the year, uniting all the county magnates, and young ladies, were

hardly reckoned as "come out" till they had appeared there. Mrs. Egremont's position would hardly be established till she had been presented to the notabilities who lived beyond calling intercourse, and her husband prepared himself to be victimized with an amount of grumbling that was intended to impress her with the nagnitude of the sacrifice, but which only nade her offer to forego the gayety, and be told that she would never have any

So their carriage led the way, and was followed by the rectory wagonette con-taining the ladies and Mark, as his father was not to be detached from his fireside. And in a group near the door, got up as claborately as his powers could accomplish, stood Gerard Godfrey. He knew nobody there except a family in his sister's parish, who had good-naturedly given him a seat in their fly, and having ful-

filled his duty by asking the daughter to dance, he had nothing to disturb him in watching for the cynosure whose attrac-tion had led him to these unknown re-

There at length he beheld the entrance There was the ogre himself, high-bred, almost handsome, as long as he was not too closely scrutinized, and on his arm the too closely scrutinized, and on his arm the well-known figure, metamorphosed by delicately tinted satin sheen and pearls, and still more by the gentle blushing gladness on the fair cheeks and the soft eyes that used to droop. Then followed a stately form in mulberry moire and point lace, leaning on Gerard's more especial abhorrence—"that puppy," who had been the author of all the mischief; and behind them three girls, one in black, the other them three girls, one in black, the other two in white, and, what was provoking, he

really could not decide which was Ursula When the pause came and people walked about, the black lady stood talking so near him that he ventured at last on a step forward and an eager "Miss Egrebut, as she turned, he found himself obliged to say, "I beg your pardon." "Did you mean my cousin? We often get mistaken for each other," said May

civilly.

He brightened. "I beg your pardon," he said, "I knew her at Mickelthwayte. I am here—quite by accident. Mrs. Elmore was so good as to bring me,"

May was rather entertained. "There's my cousin," she said, "Lord Philip Molyneaux is asking her to dance," and she left him most unnecessarily infuriated with Lord Philip Molyneaux; but later fortune favored him, for he did catch the real Nuttle's eye, and all herself, as soon real Nuttie's eye, and all herself, as soon as the dance was over, she came up with outstretched hands, "Oh, Gerard! to think of your being here. Come to mother!"
And, beautiful and radiant, Mrs. Egre-And, beautiful and radiant, Mrs. Egremont was greeting him, and there were ten minutes of delicious exchange of news. But Nuttie had no dance to spare, her card was full, and she had not learned fashionable effrontery enough to play tricks with engagements, and just then Mr. Egremont descended on them—"I wish to introduce you to the duchess," he said to his wife; and on the way he de-

wish to introduce you to the duchess," he said to his wife; and on the way he demanded—"Who is that young cub?"
"Gerard Godfrey—an old neighbor,"
"I thought I had seen him racketing about there with Ursula. I'll not have those umbrella fellows coming about!"
"These he sailt make umbrelles." "Does he really make umbrellas, Nut-tie?" asked Blanche, catching her hand. "No such thing!" said Nuttle hotly, "he is in the office. His father was a surgeon;

his sisters married clergymen!" "And he came here to meet you," said Annaple Ruthven. "Poor fellow, what a shame it is! Can't you give him one

"Oh, dear! I'm engaged ail through! To Mark this time." "Give him one of the extras! Throw Mark over to me! No!" as she looked at the faces of the two girls, "I suppose that wouldn't do, but I'm free this time—I'm not the fashion, Introduce me; I'll he my host as convolution."

do my best as consolation."

Nuttie had just performed the feat. with great shyness, when Mark appeared having been sent in quest of his cousin, when her father perceived that she had hung back. Poor Gerard led off Miss Ruthven the more gloomily, and could not help sighing out, "I suppose that is an

engagement!" "Oh, you believe some impertinent sip you may have read in the paper," re-turned Annaple, "I wonder they don't contradict it; but perhaps they treat it

with magnificent scorn." "No doubt they know that it is only premature." "If 'they' means the elders, I dare say

they wish it, but we aren't in France or Italy," "Then you don't think, Miss Ruthven,

that it will come off?"
"I don't see the slightest present prospect," said Annaple, unable to resist the kindly impulse of giving immediate pleas-ure, though she knew the prospect might

be even slighter for her partner.

However, he "footed it" all the more lightly and joyously for the assurance, and the good-natured maiden afterward made him conduct her to the tea room, whither Mark and Nuttle were also tending and there all four contributions. ing, and there all four contrived to get mixed up together. Mr. Egremont, who had been at the far end of the room, sud-denly heard her laugh, stepped up, and, with a look of thunder toward her, ob-served in a low voice, "Mark, you will oblige me by taking your cousin back to her mother." "The gray tyrant father," murmured

Annaple in sympathy.

CHAPTER X.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Egrement, waking from a doze-"that bridge?"

"Bridge! Don't be such a fool! We

aren't near it yet."

The servant, his face looking blurred brough the window, came to explain that the delay was caused by an agricultural engine, which had chosen this unlucky

light, or morning, to travel from one farm to another. There was a long delay, while the monster could be heard coughing frightfully before it could be backed with its spiky companion into a field so as to let the carriages pass by; and meantime Mr. Egremont was betrayed into uttering ejaculations which made mor Nuttle round her eyes in the dark as she sat by his feet on the back seat, and Alice try to bury her cars in her hood in the cor-

On they went at last for about a mile and then eame another sudden stop-another fierce growl from Mr. Egremont, another apparition of the servant at the win

other apparition of the servant at the window, saying, in his alert, deferential manner. "Sir, the bridge has broke under a carriage in front, Lady Delmar's, sir. The horse is plunging terrible."

The moon was up, and they saw the rectory carriage safe on the road before them, but on the bridge beyond was a struggling mass, dimly illuminated by a single carriage lamp. Mr. Egreuout and the groom hurried forward where Mark and the rectory coachman were already and the rectory coachman were already rendering what help they could, May standing at the horses' heads, and her mother trying to wrap everybody up, since stay in their carriage they could not. Transferring the horses to Nuttle, the two sisters hurried on toward the scene of ac-tion, but Blanche's white satin boots did not carry her far, and she turned on meeting her uncle. He spoke with briskuess and alacrity that made him like another man in this emergency, as she assured the anxious ladies that their friends were safe, but that they could not be extricated till the carriage was lifted from the hole into which it had sunk amid bricks, stones and broken timbers.

(To be continued.)



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